DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 734 EA 012 681

AUTHOR Emery, Rebecca A.
TITLE The Managerial Skill of Delegating or "Don't Work Late, Delegate."
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Organization: *Administrator Role: Administrators: Organizational Effectiveness: Power Structure
IDENTIFIERS *Delegation

ABSTRACT

Delegation can be defined as the granting of authority to subordinates to operate within prescribed limits. When delegating, the manager assigns duties to, grants permission or authority to, and specifies the responsibilities of the subordinate. Successful delegation requires matching the requirements of the task with the abilities of the subordinate to whom the task is assigned. Delegated authority must be respected by the manager to be effective. Delegation gives managers time, involves subordinates in operations, provides for professional development of employees, and strengthens the administrative team. (Author/PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED189734

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE MANAGERIAL SKILL OF DELEGATING

OR

"DON'T WORK LATE, DELEGATE"

by

Rebecca A. Emery

University of Arkansas

EA 012 881

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. A. Emery

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. The Philosophy of Delegating 1

A. Delegating Assignment 1
B. Delegating Authority 2
C. Delegating Responsibility 3

II. How to Delegate 4

A. The Successful Delegator 4
B. The Unsuccessful Delegator 5

III. Pros and Cons to Delegating 5

A. Roadblock to Delegating 6
B. Benefits to Delegating 6

IV. Conclusion 7

Delegation can be defined as entrusting and or letting go of objectives, functions, authority, responsibility and accountability to subordinates. Delegation is a process whereby a manager grants/permits transfer of authority to operate within prescribed limits.[1] The essence of a manager's job is getting other people to work toward the objectives of the organization. Delegation is the cornerstone to that main managerial function. According to Koontz, "The primary purpose of delegation is to make organization possible."[2] Successful delegation is the key to organization.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze delegation by directing the steps in delegation and the degrees of and rules for delegation. Also, common reasons for under delegation by managers and benefits realized will be addressed.

I. THE PHILOSOPHY OF DELEGATING

Delegation was defined above as the granting of authority to subordinates to operate within prescribed limits. In this bestowal of authority there exists three interrelated and inseperable aspects or actions in the process of delegating whereby the manager assigns the duties, grants permission/authority, and then creates an obligation. These three aspects of delegation are so important and inseperable that a change in one requires adjustment of the others.

A. Delegating Assignment

From the start a manager needs to analyze all functions, duties,

activities or results assigned to the department and determines;

1. Work that can be done by only the manager (self).
2. Work that can be delegated as soon as someone is trained.
3. Work that can be delegated immediately.

In delegating assignments, it is often suggested to delegate detailed or routine work. A manager may also find it beneficial to delegate work that he/she can do well or knows best but can bear to be without. A manager should not be too quick to delegate what he/she handles very well and with great satisfaction. However, assigning duties is only the most basic step of delegation; with the assignment must lay reasonable authority.

B. Delegating Authority

Once an assignment is made, accompanying authority is imperative as authority is the sum of power and rights assigned to a position. A delegatee needs authority to decide what to do and how to do it in the areas of activities that are delegated. Often cited principals of authority are: assigned shares of duties must equal the share of delegated authority; and authority should be delegated to lowest possible competent person.[4] This implies that the authority to achieve should be delegated insofar as possible to the units or individual nearest the part where the action must take place.[5]

Specific or general authority can be delegated or it may be written or unwritten. In most cases specific and written authority is more desirable. Specific authority tends to be more precise and clear often utilizing job description and charts as the vehicle for communication of the authority.

When authority is delegated a basic management principle must not be ignored. This principle, the unity of command states that, "The more completely an individual has a reporting relationship to a single superior, the less the problem of conflict in instructions and the greater the feeling of personal responsibility results."[6]

At times delegated authority may need to be revoked. Delegated authority is always subject to recovery by the delegator. Changes in time, activities or need for realignment can cause the need for the recovery of delegated authority.

The extent to which a manager delegates authority, how much or how little, is also important. When the organization's philosophy is to delegate authority freely, the organization is said to be decentralized. An organization in which there is little authority delegated to subordinates is spoken of as an organization with centralized authority. A manager who wished to centralize authority limits size, accomplishments and the scope of what can be effectively managed. Hence, the organization is stifled.

C. Delegating Responsibility

Once the manager has delegated duties and authority the final and other mandatory activity is that of delegating responsibility or obligation. This step is not as easily defined as the last two for this aspect calls upon the manager to create, for the subordinate, an obligation to execute, as best as he/she can, the assigned duties. The acceptance of this obligation by the delegatee creates responsibility. The responsibility is the obligation to the superior to perform delegated tasks.[7] The delegator is not relieved of the ultimate responsibility as he/she continues to supervise, direct and

control the delegatee. The manager does not abdicate responsibility. The delegated authority must equal responsibility or be coextensive. The subordinate must be delegated enough authority to undertake duties assigned and for which he/she accepts the responsibility.

Understanding the three inseperable components of delegation; assignment, authority and obligation, is imperative. For a manager putting these principles into operation is often a most difficult task.

II. HOW TO DELEGATE

In delegating, at its most elementary level, a manager would simply call in a subordinate and tell him what to do. To insure successful, well planned and beneficial delegation is usually more complicated. There are many tips or hints a smart manager would be well-advised to follow.

A. The Successful Delegator

The manager must initially find a proper delegatee, one who has the ability to carry out the task. Most managers supervise a number of subordinates and there exists degrees of delegation that will suite the purpose of the manager and the expertise of the subordinate. The degrees of delegation, credited to W. H. Nesbitt of Westinghouse Electric Corporation, range from fact finding to decision making. They are;

1. Investigate and report back.
2. Investigate and recommend.
3. Investigate and advise of action that delegatee intends to take.
4. Investigate and take action, advise of action taken.
5. Investigate and take action.[8]

The managers responsibility is then to assure that the parameters of the task are fully understood. All relevant information should be given to the subordinate and relevant others should be informed of the subordinates new area of responsibility. A good manager can offer ideas but doesn't insist on doing it his or her way. The superior would be wise to explain the importance and implications of the task and then most importantly, set goals or dictate results expected within a time frame.

Once the manager has displayed trust and confidence by delegating, he/she must establish an evaluation process. This must include intermittent check points, correcting immediately if authority has been exceeded.

In essence a manager delegates by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of subordinates, choosing the one who is capable and who also would benefit from the expanded assigned authority. The manager then proceeds to spell out the ground rules, monitoring progress, evaluating outcome and rewarding performance.

B. The Unsuccessful Delegator

Managers must avoid usurping delegated authority once granted. The delegator must also avoid resuming the activities of the task delegated. A manager cannot expect perfection and must allow for mistakes. Sometimes managers find themselves in the untenable position of having subordinates delegate to them. This principal is called authority-level principal. Koontz defines this as, "maintenance of intended delegation requires that decisions within the authority competence of individuals be made by them and not be referred upward in the organization structure."[9]

B. Benefits of Delegating

By delegating managers can gain the pleasure of and time needed for proper managing. Delegating is an excellent way to achieve involvement in the organization as employees will see themselves as important and critical to the successful operations. By giving authority, the delegatee has a vested interest in results produced.

Delegation of decisions encourages professional development of the subordinate by encouraging initiative, skill and training. By enriching the subordinates job it builds a well trained team for the manager. Delegation basically benefits the manager by expanding his/her scope of authority and accountability.[11]

In short, the benefits a manager can receive by learning to delegate are more time for his/her managerial functions, a well-trained, enthusiastic and involved staff which has an interest in expanding production. By delegating, a manager is simply able to get more done in a more efficient manner.

IV. CONCLUSION

Delegation is bestowing tasks, authority and responsibility on a subordinate. Proper delegation by a good manager assumes tasks will be distributed to others according to the skills and qualifications necessary to effectively accomplishing the delegated tasks. It is important for the manager to communicate clearly and specifically the results desired, evaluating as progress evolves. While it is difficult for many managers to learn to delegate, many benefits can be realized through successful delegation. With delegation the organization can be broadened in scope and efficiency with all employees adding to the success of the organization, as delegating creates

positive and enthusiastic attitudes by bringing personnel into the mainstream of the organization.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Robert D. Buchanan, "How to Effectively Delegate," Food Service Marketing, December 1977, p. 55.

[2]Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnell, Management (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976), p. 375.

[3]Marion E. Haynes, "Delegation: Key to Involvement," Personnel Journal, June, 1974, p. 455.

[4]Dale Yoder, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations (London: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 149.

[5]William R. Dersal, The Successful Supervisor (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 38.

[6]Koontz, p. 380.

[7]Theo Haiman, Professional Management (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), p. 56-7.

[8]Haynes, p. 455.

[9]Koontz, p. 380.

[10]Earnest R. Archer, "Delegation and the 'dirty hands' Syndrome," Supervisory Management, November 1977, p. 32.

[11]Thomas W. Zimmerer, "How to Reduce Dependence on the Boss," Nations Business, February, 1977, p. 56.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archer, Earnest R., "Delegation & the 'dirty hands' Syndrome," Supervisory Management, November, 1977.

Buchanan, Robert D., "How to Effectively Delegate," Food Service Marketing, December, 1977.

Dersal, William R., The Successful Supervisor. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

Haiman, Theo, Professional Management. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.

Haynes, Marion E., "Delegation: Key to Involvement," Personnel Journal, June, 1974.

Koontz, Harold & O'Donnell, Cyril, Management. New York: McGraw Hill, 1976.

Yoder, Dale, Personnel Management & Industrial Relations. London: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Zimmerer, Thomas W., "How to Reduce Dependence on the Boss," Nations Business, February, 1977.